The Sound of the Waves

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The Sound of the Waves

by extremelyperturbed

Summary

Done in answer to this kinkmeme: Villagers throw Will into the sea as a sacrifice to the sea god for increased yield in fish. http://hannibalkink.dreamwidth.org/4963.html?thread=8197219#cmt8197219

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Chapter 1

Will sat on the deck of his boat and read the letter. It had come from Apsylem, a prosperous fishing village a day's journey from where he was currently anchoring. It had promised him a job saving the village from the wrath of a sea monster.

Will sighed. He no longer wanted to hunt monsters of the deep. He had been fortunate not to have drowned or been eaten and he had an eye on a small house with a large yard where he could settle down with a family and some dogs. It would be near enough so he could go fishing off a pier but far enough away to avoid the worst of the winter storms.

He poured himself a cup of beer. He stopped to remember the last monster he had killed. There had been a red sea dragon that had been troubling the area, attacking every full moon and targeting entire families. Some sea monsters could be propitiated with regular sacrifices of animals, this was not one of them. Angry villages up and down the coast had put together a large bounty, a bounty large enough for him to retire on.

He had gone forth in his boat with his small crew and saw that the monster was fighting another of its kind that was the color of coal. They were biting and slashing at each other with their teeth and claws. Will had decided to let them fight each other and hope that the fighting would kill them both. However, when he saw that the black dragon was about to be killed, he fired several flaming harpoons into the red dragon, aiming for the already open wounds. The beast tried to extinguish the flames by diving underwater, only to discover that water did nothing to quench them.

The black dragon had taken advantage of the situation and finished off the other beast, ripping into its neck and side. As the red dragon's corpse floated on the water, the black beast made no move to attack but looked at the boat. Will felt that the focus of the beast's gaze was himself.

"Is he going to attack?" said Beverly. "We're running a bit low on the fire."

"No, he's pretty wounded," said Will. "And if he knows what's good for him, he'll leave us for another day."

As he predicted, the black dragon turned and dove into the water.

They had managed to carry back the red dragon's head to a council of village leaders, who gratefully gave him the bounty promised, which he split with Beverly, Jimmy, Brian and the rest of the crew. They had all left to go back to their villages and buy themselves large houses with plenty of land. Unless the amount was a similar amount to the previous hunt, he wasn't sure they'd be interested, especially since they had been lucky that another creature had done much of the work for them.

He decided to forward the letter to his first mate Beverly with a note from him asking her to discuss the proposal with the others. He went to the village square of Wolf Trap and hired a

messenger to carry it for him and paid him a silver coin for his pains. After that, he went to the local dog breeder whose prize bitch had recently produced pups.

***

Will was on the deck of his ship trying to decide if he should go fishing when he heard someone yell, “Captain Graham, Captain Graham.”

Will looked over the side to see a man who reminded him of a wandering trinket hawker despite his expensive silks and his silver-headed cane. “What is it that you want?”

“I am the head of my village, Apsylem. My name is Frederick Chilton. I am here to beseech you to come to my village.”

Will scowled. “I would have to talk to the rest of my crew. They are currently on leave and won’t be back until later this month. Besides, I doubt you could afford our fee. Twelve villages contributed to the fee for the last job.”

“How much was it?”

“It was a chest full of gold. No silver, no copper. Gold.”

Frederick looked as if he might swallow his tongue but he gamely proceeded. “I believe that the merchants of my village can come up with a similar amount. May I come up or can we go to a nearby pub to talk about this like civilized men?”

“The fee is non-negotiable and it has to be paid upfront.”

“I don’t think that’s entirely fair. However, I shall endeavor to fulfill your request.”

“I’ll be down in a minute,” said Will.

***

Will slowly came to with a pain in his head. He remembered that as much as Frederick had pushed liquor on him, he had been careful not to get drunk as he didn’t want to agree to a smaller amount than he initially stated. As he opened his eyes, he was confused when he found that he was not in his bed and found that he was lying on a beach. As he got to his feet, he saw a man sitting nearby and said, “What’s going on? Who are you?”

“It would appear that we are being abandoned to our fate,” said the man as he got to his feet and pointed at the boat in the distance.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The boat was far enough away so swimming towards it would have been pointless but not far enough that Will couldn't recognize that Chilton was on board. "You fucking bastard!" screamed Will. Realizing that Chilton probably couldn't hear him, Will turned toward his companion.

The man standing next to him was not much taller than him but broader of shoulder with a face made of severe angles. He didn't seem as outraged as Will felt. If anything, he was unusually calm.

"Who are you? What's going on?" said Will.

"My name is Hannibal. We have been left on this island by Chilton."

"But why?"

"As a sacrifice to Apsylem's sea god, the black dragon."

Will scowled. "Why dump us on this island instead of into the water?"

"The dragon likes to play with his food."

"How much time do we have before he comes to eat us?"

"The full moon. While you were unconscious, I heard them mention they make monthly sacrifices."

Will remembered that a week had passed after the previous full moon. "What is it about dragons and the full moon?" sighed Will. "We don't have much time to escape."

"Escape?" Hannibal gave him a small wry smile. "I don't see how that's possible."

Will looked back at the island and what he saw looked promising. "There are some trees, some vines and . . ." Will reached pulled out a small knife from his pocket. "I've got my knife."

Hannibal looked astonished. "What's your name?"

"Will. Will Graham."

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As they sat near a fire, Hannibal said, "A raft? Do you really think that's wise?"

"Wiser than being a sitting buffet," said Will. "You do want to live, right?"

“Of course. It’s just that other than your knife, we have no tools.”

“There might be some trees that are down we can drag to the beach and tie together to make a raft. If there aren’t enough of them, I’ll make an axe.”

“How?”

“A stone axe,” said Will. “If I can find a hard enough rock, I can chip it until it has a sharp edge and tie it to a stick so I can chop down a tree. It doesn’t have to last forever. It just has to work. Also, things might go faster if I use fire to burn through the wood.”

“Drowning or dying of thirst isn’t exactly pleasant.”

“I can’t force you to come but I don’t think we’re that far away from Apsylem.”

“Why do you think that?”

Will smiled. “Because I saw the boat Chilton was using. It was a small boat, not meant for long voyages. Besides if the dragon wants monthly sacrifices, it doesn’t make sense to go somewhere too far to dump the victims. Also, I know that some people will be looking for me.”

“Oh?”

“I’m captain of a ship and I’d just written a letter to Beverly about the job Chilton supposedly had for me. She’s bound to go looking for me.”

“Is Beverly your wife?”

Will shook his head. “No, she’s my first mate. She’s on leave with the rest of my crew. I just hope she doesn’t take too long on replying to my letter.”

“Why did he go out of his way to sacrifice you?”

“I killed a large red sea dragon a short time ago. I suppose Chilton wanted to protect his benefactor and curry favor at the same time. What’s your story?”

“I was a wanderer who came to his village. Chilton made me a lot of promises . . .”

“Is there anybody who will be looking for you?”

“I am the only one left of my family. My parents and my sister have passed away long ago. I have been interested in starting a new one but things have not worked out that way.”

“Maybe things will change once we get back.”

“Perhaps.”

***

Will woke up to the smell of food cooking. He frowned.

He saw that Hannibal had two place mats woven from leaves with scrambled eggs on top. “Where did you get that?”

“I found a clutch of eggs. I cooked it on top of a large flat rock. I thought you would appreciate some protein before trying to make the boat.”

“Oh, thanks,” said Will. He saw that it was still hot and brought the mat to his lips and carefully took a bite of the eggs. He was surprised when he found that it had been seasoned with what seemed to be herbs. “It’s delicious.”

“There are some fruit trees and a spring.”

“Good, we won’t starve or die of thirst. I‘ll see if there‘s driftwood we can use for the raft.”

After finding some logs in the driftwood, he made a pile of them near where they were staying. Then he spent a better part of a day finding a stick and a rock large and hard enough to act as an axe. After spending hours chipping the stone into having a sharp edge and affixing the rock into a groove he created in the stick and tying it as securely as he could, he finally had a viable axe.

“Will?”

Will turned to see Hannibal carrying several fruits in his shirt along with a placemat with a cooked fish on top of it. “You need to eat.”

Will wiped the sweat away from his brow. He would protested that he needed to keep working except his stomach grumbled. “You’re right. Thanks. I’ll work on your axe next.”

“I think it would be better if I were to work on getting food for the both of us and make containers that can hold water while you concentrate on the raft. I know little of these matters.”

“Maybe you’re right,” said Will.

They sat together, eating in the shade. “Once we get back, I could recommend that you become part of the crew. The rest of the crew would have to agree but I think some of your cooking would win them over.”

“That’s very kind of you.”

“I think Beverly will make a great captain. You’ll like her.”

Hannibal had been about to eat a grape but put his hand back on his lap. “You wouldn’t be captain?”

“I was thinking of retiring.”

“You are not an old man.”

“No but I am at a time in my life that I want to start a family and I don’t want to spend most of my time away from them.”

“I see.”

Will carefully chewed a bite of the fish and swallowed after making sure there was no small bones. “The problem is that I’m afraid that I’ll miss the sound of the waves and go back out there anyway.”

“Then you should find someone who understands that.”

***

“Will? Will?” said Beverly as she walked through the ship, followed by Brian. Jimmy was checking other parts of the ship. She had ridden into town with the men after receiving his letter regarding his proposal and wanted to discuss the idea with him face to face. However, there had been no answer when she hailed the ship from the pier where it was docked.

“Maybe he went on vacation,” said Brian.

“That hermit?” scoffed Beverly. “Besides, if he was going to go on vacation, he would have asked me to pick up the dog that he bought last week.”

“He didn’t pick up a dog? That’s not like him at all,” said Jimmy.

“I sent Matthew into town to look for anybody who may have seen Will last.”

“Do you think they kidnapped him over the chest of gold?”

“Considering the ship has the chest with his share of the gold on it, I don’t think that was the motive,” said Brian as he walked into the room where they were standing.

They walked off the ship and unto the pier when they saw Matthew running towards them.

“What’s wrong, Matthew?” said Beverly.

“The last time anybody in town saw Will was when he had dinner at a nearby pub with a name named Chilton. The bartender said that Will got drunk and Chilton said he was going to take Will home in his carriage.”

Beverly narrowed her eyes.

Chapter End Notes

https://youtu.be/BN-34JfUrHY shows how to make a stone axe from scratch.

http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Stone-Axe This is another way to make a stone axe. Will's method is a bit closer to this one. Though the video above shows how effective a

stone axe can be.

https://youtu.be/yDSr_P50EZs is something like what Will has in mind though Will wants something slightly bigger to hold two men and water containers. Remember, Will is pressed for time and equipment so he can't make anything too complicated. He is also constrained by the lack of large animal hides and glues and nails.

I did consider a dugout canoe but this video segment shows why I considered it way more laborious than the raft: the laborious hollowing process. https://youtu.be/_gB9lv9Z3vM?t=1m7s Also remember, any dugout canoe would require a very large tree that Will would have to chop through.

http://www.native-art-in-canada.com/fellatree.html is one suggested way to bring down the tree without an axe but has the side effect of setting the tree on fire if you do it wrong.

The basic area is set more along the Mediterranean sea so no tropical fruits like coconuts or palm leaves.

Will is someone who is a canonical sailor, good with his hands and surprises people with his ideas. Also, I prefer someone who constantly tries to scheme their way out of any spot they're in.

I did briefly consider a version before starting this story where Will was part of a group of prisoners including Gideon and Matthew Brown but nixed it.

Chapter 3

Will sighed as he put down the axe and began massaging his aching hands. He only had a few more trees to cut down before he could start to make the raft.

“Will? Are you all right?”

He saw Hannibal walking towards him holding a little basket in his hands. “I’m fine. Just tired. Did you make that?”

“Yes, I wove some grass into a basket then cooked some resin into pitch to line it. As it seems to work, I shall see if I can make larger baskets.”

“And you said that you had no tools.”

“One becomes creative when one is desperate.”

“What’s in it?”

Hannibal opened up the little basket to show a pale yellow cream. “I noticed that your hands must be tired so I made a little balm for them. May I see them?”

Will reluctantly held out his hands and let Hannibal take one of them between his hands and massage the cream into them. Within a minute, his hand stopped hurting and felt refreshed. Hannibal took Will’s other hand and did the same.

“That’s amazing.”

“One learns many things while traveling,” said Hannibal. “Can I do your back and shoulders?”

“I shouldn’t . . .”

“Please, I do this for selfish reasons. I want you to be in the best condition for our voyage home.”

“I hope you realize that I won’t be the only one paddling.”

“I would not demand that of you. Please turn around and sit down.”

Will sighed and did so. Hannibal sat behind him and began loosening the knots in Will’s back. As he felt Hannibal’s hands press and manipulate his muscles, he let out little moans of pleasures that he felt deeply embarrassed about. When Will felt the tightness of his neck dissolve under Hannibal’s ministrations, he closed his eyes and fell asleep, falling backwards into Hannibal‘s arms.

Hannibal put Will on the ground and looked at the axe next to the tree.

***

Beverly looked at the entire crew that were now seated in the meeting room of the ship. “I have an important announcement to make. Will Graham is missing and I believe he has been kidnapped by Frederick Chilton of Apsylem.”

A rumble swept through the crew. Will was by no means an outgoing and overtly friendly man, but he was always fair, thoughtful when it came to plans, and reached out to them when they had needed his help. And in any case, an attack on one member was an attack on all of them.

“So, when do we burn down the village,” said Matthew.

“None of that talk,” said Beverly. “It may very well be that Chilton did this on his own authority without knowledge of the rest of the village. I have no problem with going after Chilton and getting the truth out of him, however. So, who votes that we nab Chilton?”

Everybody raised their hand.

Beverly smiled. “Good. My information is that Chilton often travels between villages to attend various festivities. He’s planning to go to one in three days. Brian and I plan to dress up and meet him there. I plan to be a little more friendly than usual and get him somewhere quiet where I will then slip him a dosed drink. Once asleep, Brian will help me drag him unto the ship where we can ask him some questions. Once he tells us where Will is, we will go where he tells us but keep him on board so he can’t lie to us.”

“Then do we throw him overboard as shark bait?” said Matthew.

“Unfortunately, no,” said Beverly. “We have to return him to land after we rescue Will.”

“He’ll come after us.”

“The villages we saved will back us up especially since neither the village headman nor Apsylem are particularly popular. And Chilton went to Wolf Trap to kidnap Will. The headman of Wolf Trap knows about it and he is willing to help.”

“I don’t understand why did Chilton kidnap Will? Was it because of the gold?”

“The headman of Wolf Trap told me that Apsylem worships a sea dragon and offers it monthly sacrifices. The sacrifices are usually livestock but they sometimes include criminals and prisoners. He thinks that Will might’ve been chosen for the upcoming month’s sacrifices.”

“Suppose Will’s already dead,” said Jimmy.

“Then we can talk then about chumming the waters.”

***

Will opened his eyes to hear Hannibal singing what sounded like a lullaby in a language he had never heard of. He sat up and was displeased to see that the sun was high in the sky. “You shouldn’t have let me sleep so much.”

“Good day to you as well,” said Hannibal.

“I’m serious,” said Will. “I still have some . . .”

“I chopped some logs down while you were asleep.”

“What?”

Will saw that there were four more logs on the pile. “Oh, you didn’t have to . . .”

“I would’ve cut down more but I needed to keep an eye on a dish . . . I’m sure you will like it.”

“What did you make?”

“Have you heard of beggar‘s chicken?”

Will shook his head. “No.”

Hannibal smiled. “There is a story behind the dish. Once there was a beggar who caught a chicken but he didn’t want the savory aroma of it cooking to attract another beggar who would either demand a share or even taken the entire bird from him. So he took some clay and put it around the bird and cooked it while it was covered with clay. After the clay had hardened around the bird, he struck it so the clay fell away. The bird inside was juicy and moist. Nowadays, most restaurants use dough instead of clay.”

Hannibal took a large oval mound of clay from the fire and struck it with a wooden stick to reveal a cooked bird wrapped in leaves. After he peeled the leaves away, the smell of roast flesh infused with herbal goodness made Will salivate. “It doesn’t quite smell like chicken," said Will.

“It’s actually pheasant,” said Hannibal. “I hope you don’t mind the substitution.”

“I don’t mind at all,” said Will.

Hannibal ate some breast meat while Will attacked a drumstick.

“I’m curious,” said Will after he put down the well-gnawed bone. “What were you singing?”

“Singing? Oh, it’s a wishing song.”

“A wishing song?”

“In my native tongue, you sing it over and over to make something come true.”

“Does it work?”

“Sometimes.”

“What were you wishing for?”

“My wish was to serve you a proper dinner with utensils and china and a bottle of fine wine.”

Will chuckled. “It won’t be too long now,” said Will. “Now I just have to tie the logs together, carve some paddles and a rudder then we should push off in a few days.”

“There are almost two weeks before the dragon comes.”

“We should leave well before it gets here. The longer I‘m gone, the more likely they‘ll think I‘m dead and stop searching for me.”

“If I were to sing a wishing song for you, what would you like me to sing?”

“Besides, getting off this island? It would be nice if we could stay friends after this.”

“I have no problem singing that. Now how about you tell me more about your fight against the bear monster.”

***

Chilton opened his eyes then gasped as he found himself naked and tied to a chair in an unfamiliar room. How much did I have to drink last night, he thought.

“He’s awake.”

Chapter 4

Chilton looked up and saw the woman who had flirted with him and served him spiced wine the night before. Now, she wasn't wearing a frilly dress and jewelry Instead, she was wearing boots, men's clothes and instead of a fan, she was wearing a pistol. Standing next to her were three men glowering at him. "Oh, God, please don't kill me. You can take all my money . . ."

"I don't care about that. Where is Will Graham?"

No, thought Chilton. "Will who? I don't . . ."

The woman rolled her eyes and punched him in the crotch.

"Ow! It hurts!" Chilton's eyes were full of tears of pain. "Please, I can't help you."

She punched him again. "Is Will dead?"

"He might not be," whimpered Chilton. "Please don't punch my nuts again!"

***

Will found himself wrapped in the coils of a serpent, his arms and legs held apart so he was in a spread eagle position. He found himself looking at the face of the black dragon, who was much smaller than he had been when Will had last seen him but still large enough to be menacing. The dragon stuck his tongue out like a snake tasting the air. Will felt his body begin to drip with sweat which the dragon licked up like a child savoring the melting drops of a fruit ice. Will began to writhe and yell out in terror only to have the dragon seem to huff with laughter than go back to licking him with increased vigor.

He felt the dragon's tongue circle then squeeze his nipples, travel up to the back of his neck and trace his spine. His suspicions that the dragon's interest was not culinary was confirmed when it began licking his cock and his balls in earnest. He felt the dragon nip his thighs when he tried to squirm away from its attentive tongue.

Will woke up and found Hannibal looking down at him, concerned. He was about to reassure him that he was all right but in truth, he felt hot and sweaty. "Hannibal?"

"You were crying out in your sleep."

"I'm sorry," said Will, sitting up. "I just had a bad dream."

Hannibal had a bemused smile on his face.

"I don't see what's so funny."

The smile faded. "I'm sorry but just before you woke up . . ."

Will looked down at himself and saw that he had come. He felt horribly embarrassed. “Oh, God.”

“I’m sorry for laughing at you. It was very rude of me.” Hannibal sat down next to him and put a comforting hand on his shoulder.

“I don’t feel very well,” said Will. He really did feel quite ill.

“I’m sure you’ll be over it soon.”

“I hope so but if I get sicker, you should go on the raft without me. I have a compass and if you follow due south . . .”

Hannibal frowned. “I would never do that.”

“Why not?”

“You’re such a clever boy but sometimes you are so blind,” said Hannibal before he kissed Will on the lips.

Will blinked in surprise before closing his eyes and accepting his touch. After the third kiss, Will said, “Wait, you might catch what I have.”

Hannibal winked at him. “You know Will, you worry too much.” Hannibal got up. “I think you’ll like tonight’s dinner.”

***

Will woke up. The dream he had during the night had been different from the previous one. The dragon was, again, smaller than he had been in real life. Instead of aggressively licking him, he seemed content to enjoy the heat exuded from Will’s body while taking long, lazy licks along the back of his neck. He only squeezed Will with his coils when he tried to wriggle out of them.

“I might not be able to make the rudder but I know I can make the paddles,” said Will, still feeling under the weather. “Hand me that piece of wood.”

“I would not want you to over exert yourself,” said Hannibal as he handed Will the piece of wood.

“How can you remain so calm?”

“Because I am here with you. Would you prefer I panic and be absolutely useless to you?”

“No, of course not.”

“Then let me take care of you.”

“Do you see something at the horizon?” said Will, dropping his piece of wood on the sand.

Hannibal turned and said, “I don’t see anything.”

“It’s very small but it’s there, it’s there,” said Will, excited. “Oh, wait, it’s getting smaller, it’s going the wrong way.”

“Are you sure it wasn’t a mirage?”

“I’m sure. We might be saved earlier than expected.”

Will started work on the paddle while trying to keep an eye on the horizon where the ship had been.

***

Beverly scanned the horizon with her binoculars. She frowned. “I don’t see it, Chilton,” she said. “You said it would be here.”

“That’s what I was trying to warn you about.”

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Beverly turned and frowned at Chilton who was now clothed and no longer tied to a chair but had his wrists in manacles. “You said it would be hard to find.”

“It is hard to find because only people allowed to see the island can see it. And unless you approach the island just right, the currents in the water will take you around it instead of towards it.”

Beverly turned to Matthew. “Question him and see if he’s telling the truth.”

Matthew grabbed Chilton’s face and looked intently into his eyes. “Are you telling the truth? Before you answer, know that I‘ll throttle if you lie to me.”

“Yes. I am,” said Chilton.

Matthew turned to Beverly. “He’s telling the truth.”

“One more question. If Will is alive, can he see us?”

“I don’t know. Nobody‘s ever escaped the island.”

Matthew said, “He’s not lying about that.” He let go of Chilton’s face and looked away in disgust.

“That’s a problem. We’re going to have to rely on Chilton’s directions. We can’t go too fast or we might end up grounding ourselves on a shoal or some rocks. And even if we get to the island, it might take a while to find Will if he’s hiding. Is there any way that you can make the island visible for anybody else here?”

“I’m not the one who cast the spell,” said Chilton. “Don’t you have a magician on board?”

“The only one who was even slightly gifted in magic was Will,” said Beverly, frowning.

“We could send out some of our boats in the general direction of where Chilton is pointing once we get within range,” said Brian. "That would keep the main ship safe."

“That’s an idea but it has a few problems,” said Beverly. “We’re assuming that once they get on the island, it will be visible to them. The other problem is that the dragon might be on the island. I don’t want to end up serving hors d’oeuvres to it.” She turned to Chilton. “Is it on the island?”

“I can’t tell from this distance but I can tell you it’s a big enough island that it could hide and attack,” said Chilton.

“I got an idea,” said Matthew.

“Go on,” said Beverly.

“We get Chilton to summon the dragon. We kill the dragon that’s casting the spell. The spell is broken once it dies. We rescue Will and any other sacrifices on the island.”

“No! If I set him up to be attacked, the dragon will destroy the village!” said Chilton.

Beverly closed her eyes. What would Will do, she thought. By temperament, she was more cautious and less prone to the kind of inspiration that helped Will win battles against insane odds.

“Bev?” said Jimmy. “What should we do?”

Beverly opened her eyes. “We’re going to go towards the island slowly but I‘m keeping everybody on board. If the island does not become visible as we get closer to it, we will force Chilton to summon the dragon and then we will destroy him. Men, fire up the spears!”

“Aye, aye, Captain,” said Brian.

***

Will sighed as he put down the paddle. It was barely more than a board with a handle but it would have to do.

“Will?”

“What is it?”

“I see something on the horizon but it’s not a ship . . .”

Will stood up and looked at where Hannibal was pointing. “Oh, God, it’s a storm, a big one," said Will as he saw a gigantic mass of clouds, threatening and light-blotting.

“I know of a cave where we could take shelter if it comes here.”

“Why don’t you go first and set things up?” said Will.

“How about we take the raft away from the beach so it won’t get swept away if the tides rise?”

“All right but then I'm coming back to the beach.”

***

“Bev?” said Jimmy. “What kind of storm is that?” He was pointing at the swirling dark gray clouds unleashing torrents of rain in the distance. The shape was strangely reminiscent of an anvil.

“I’ve seen a storm like that only once before,” said Beverly. “It’s the type that destroys ships.”

“It doesn’t seem to be moving towards us but it’s hovering between us and the island. We aren’t going to sail through it, are we?” said Brian.

“No, we’re going to go hard to starboard and see if we can go around it.”

After going away from the island for two nautical miles, Beverly had the ship stop. “All right, let’s go hard to port,” said Beverly.

Much to Beverly’s irritation but not to her surprise, the storm floated so it was again between them and the island. “Oh fuck me,” she snapped as the storm also started flashing lightning as if warning her that it was capable of much more damage.

“Lord, save me!” yelled Chilton, emboldened by the show of the dragon’s power.

Unfortunately for him, one of the lightning bolts from the storm hit the mast with part of its energy bouncing off and striking him. The force of the strike knocked him off his feet and set his shirt on fire which Beverly managed to put out with her coat. The other sailors on the ship worked to keep the mast from burning.

“What do we do now?” said Jimmy.

After putting Chilton out, Beverly looked at the rest of the crew. They looked terrified at the forces being unleashed. Sailors were a superstitious bunch and she could see that Chilton being hit by lightning struck them as a bad omen. “We’re turning back,” said Beverly.

“We can’t abandon Captain Graham,” cried Matthew.

“I am Captain now and the last thing Will would ever want is for me to sacrifice the entire crew for a very small chance of saving him. If you know a way to get to the island without going through that storm, I’d like to hear it right now. Do you have one?”

Matthew closed his eyes. “I don’t.”

Chapter End Notes

The kind of storm Beverly is facing is a supercell.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supercell#Anvil

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUFGx68gyLk is a very nice representation of the kind of storm she's facing.

Matthew's skill is not considered magic. Useful but not magic.

As greedy & petty & all-around horrible as he can be, I don't think Chilton wants the burden of being responsible for the death of an entire village.

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will stood on the beach and frowned. The way the storm was moving was unusual. Despite Hannibal's insistence that there was no ship out there, he was sure that there was one and that it was his ship. This is not a natural storm, he thought. It must be blocking the ship. Plans whirled through his head.

He ran to the cave where he and Hannibal had stashed their raft. He saw that Hannibal was singing one of his lullabies. "Hannibal!"

"Yes?" Hannibal looked peeved at being interrupted.

"We need to go now."

"But there's a storm out there."

"That's why we need to go now. That storm's busy with the ship near the horizon. It's a storm that obviously needs a lot of energy. I trust Beverly to keep the ship out of harm's way. While she's keeping it occupied, it's time we go out because I don't think the dragon has enough power to do two storms, even if the second is a small one."

"It's just not . . ."

"I'm leaving," said Will. "I'm taking the raft and I'm going to go south. I won't just stay here and do nothing but wait to be eaten." Will knew that Beverly took her responsibility as captain seriously and as much loyalty as she had for him, she couldn't stay forever so he couldn't wait much longer. Also, his illness had, if anything, gotten worse with a weird feeling of becoming insubstantial and melting. I need a doctor, he thought, and I need one quickly.

"I will help you take the raft to the beach," said Hannibal.

After they put the raft down on the beach, Will turned to Hannibal. "Come with me while there's still time. You can fill some of the baskets with water but it really won't take but a day."

***

"The storm looks like it's weakening," said Matthew.

Beverly looked closely at it. "It's smaller but it's not gone."

"Perhaps we can wait it out," said Matthew excitedly. "Something like this takes a lot of magic. As long as we stay out of range, the dragon will tire, the storm will disappear and we can sail in."

“That’s a thought. However . . .”

“However?” said Matthew.

“There are two problems. The only one who could see the island is currently in sick bay after being hit by lightning. Until Chilton can get back on deck, we only have a vague idea about where to sail. Also, how do we know it’s not a trap? It could disappear, get us within range then reappear right on top of us. If it were just you and me, I would gladly risk the ship but you and I are not the only ones on board. I will, however, stay here out of range for a little while longer as long as the storm does not move towards us.”

Matthew smiled. “Thank you.”

“And don’t kill Chilton in the meantime.”

***

Hannibal said, “How about a kiss for luck then we go?”

“You’re so insufferable, you know that,” said Will but he said it with a smile. Hannibal’s reluctance to leave was making him uneasy since he had become fond of this man who fed him and listened to him and made him laugh and he couldn't bear to leave him behind. “Just one.”

“That’s all I need.”

Will closed his eyes and let Hannibal wrap his arms around him. He felt Hannibal‘s lips on his own and enjoyed their warmth until he felt something sharp prick his lower lip. “Ow, you bit my . . .” He suddenly felt as if he had lost all his strength and felt himself being held up by Hannibal. A light swept through his mind. “You were working for the dragon all this time.”

“Working? No, I am the dragon.”

Will grimaced. “You really do like to play with your food.”

Hannibal swept him off his feet and carried him in his arms. “You’re not food. You never were.”

***

Taking a short break after hours of waiting, Beverly was having a glass of beer in her office below deck when Brian ran in. “Sorry, Captain but I just had to tell you. The storm is gone.”

“It’s gone?” she said. She quickly finished up her beer before running up to the deck. It was as Brian said. The sky was a clear blue.

“What should we do?” said Jimmy.

“Get Chilton on deck. I heard that he’s opened his eyes and is no longer in danger of dying. He doesn’t have to be able to stand, just be able to see,” said Beverly. Instead of giving her hope, this sudden change made her nervous and uneasy. Nothing was ever this simple.

Matthew had carried Chilton over his shoulder like a roll carpet or a big bag of dirty potatoes. Matthew put Chilton down near the railing. “Where is the island?”

Chilton looked out at the sea, his head swiveling this way and that. He seemed more and more frantic by the second. “I don’t see it.”

“What?” said Beverly.

“I don’t see it any more. Being hit by lightning must have ruined my ability to see it.”

Brian and Jimmy had to hold back Matthew.

***

“Why?” said Will as Hannibal carried him much deeper into the cave. “Why all this?”

“Do you know why the red dragon attacked me that day?”

“I thought that he was after your territory, wanted to prove himself the dominant dragon.”

Hannibal chuckled. “Yes, those are the typical reasons but there were other reasons as well. Did you know that when a dragon eats a dragon, he gains the power and the knowledge of the dragon he eats?”

“That’s quite an incentive. What kind of powers do you have that he’d want?”

“I have lived a very long time and have often traveled in human form. I have learned magic that other dragons rarely practice. He had made a request of me and when I refused him, he decided to try to take it from me.”

“What did he ask for and why couldn’t you give it to him?”

“He often traveled in human form himself. He had found his heart ensnared by a blind woman who loved the man he presented himself to be. He knew, however, that her form was too fragile and too ephemeral for his love in the long run. Humans are little more than light, air and color in terms of existence. He wanted something more lasting, to transform her so she could truly accept him.

Hannibal continued. “I refused him because only a select few can truly Become. Trying to force a Becoming on someone unsuited for it leads to suicidal madness or catatonia. And there was nothing in it for me. Enraged, he tried to kill me and that’s when I first saw you. I owe you a debt for helping me kill him. Take a look ahead.”

Will slowly turned his head so he could look where Hannibal was carrying him and saw a huge cavern full of treasure. For a second, he wondered if Hannibal was going to offer him something from his vast collection. However, what really caught his eye was a woven cylindrical basket three feet tall and six feet wide with a strange pattern woven into the design along its sides. “What is that basket and what does it contain?”

“Did you know that the process of Becoming takes about a month? It takes a week just to prepare all the ingredients, then three weeks to slowly make the subject ready for the final

step.”

“Oh, God, you’re talking about me . . .” said Will.

“Your body is on the brink of dissolving. It would have been very . . . unfortunate for you to have been on the raft at this point.” Hannibal put Will down next to the basket and lifted the lid and put it aside. He lifted Will again and Will saw that it was full of a black liquid that smelled of metal.

“It’s dragon’s blood,” said Will. “It’s your blood.”

“Yes. Even as giant as I truly am, it was not without peril to fill it with so much of it. You will dissolve and your essence will intermingle with it then reform into someone more beautiful and powerful than you are now. This is not a punishment. It’s a gift even if you do not understand it now.”

“Why me?”

“Do you really need to ask? Nobody else has been found worthy in my eyes.”

Hannibal watched as Will sank into the darkness before putting the lid on the basket and tying the lid shut. He had come across this spell while having tried to revive the members of his family. He put his arms around the basket and began singing again and thought that even though he could whisper through the chrysalis, he could not predict entirely the nature of what would issue forth. All he could do was wish and wait for the realization of the imago.

The End

Chapter End Notes

There will be an Epilogue.

Epilogue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Four months later

“Captain, do you think one of them is the same dragon that was behind Will‘s disappearance?” said Matthew as he talked to Beverly.

“That’s what we’re here to see,” she said evenly. “I prefer not to go after dragons that have not proven itself a menace to the villages.” The dragon that Chilton had sacrificed to had not been seen for months after his exile. There was rampant speculation why this was so. One rumor posited that the dragon had been so displeased by the sacrifice, he had completely withdrawn his favor. What had brought them out here was a reported sighting of two black dragons entangled in each other's coils and writhing against each other as if they were fighting. If they were fighting, Beverly thought, It will be easier to attack the one we want.

“Captain, I see a ship on the horizon due west,” yelled Brian from the crow’s nest, a place set high on the ship so a sailor could see farther.

Beverly stood on the deck of the ship, looking at the ship in the distance through her binoculars. She put her binoculars down after recognizing two of the people on board. “Men, get the fire and the weapons ready!”

“Who are they?” said Jimmy.

“They’re the Verger pirates.”

“You’re talking about Mason Verger?” said Jimmy, looking grim.

“Yes,” said Beverly. Mason Verger was an infamous pirate who was known for his sadistic and perverse behavior towards prisoners and hostages. As a result, most chose to fight to the death rather than surrender to him and his crew.

“What is he doing here?”

“I saw an old friend of ours on board that ship.”

“Who?” said Matthew.

“Chilton.”

“I thought he was exiled!” said Jimmy.

"He was," said Beverly. There had been a huge scandal when it was revealed that Chilton had kidnapped someone who was not only a member of another village but a man who had headed the expedition that had killed a monster that had ravaged twelve villages. Because of

the witnesses in Wolf Trap, it was not a crime that could be easily denied. Chilton had defended himself, claiming that he had done it under orders of the village's sea god. However, there was no sign that sea god intended to do anything to protect Chilton from the consequences of his actions. To avoid being blamed for Chilton's crimes and further embarrassment, Apsylem quickly moved to replace Chilton with Alana Bloom and exiled Chilton to a distant island that was little more than a bunch of rocks held together by grass and a few trees. It had not been anticipated that anybody would want to rescue him. "Chilton probably struck a bargain with Mason to get off the island. I imagine that Chilton told Mason about the chest of gold on this ship. Also, Chilton probably knows where the dragon hid its treasure on the island even if the island is currently hidden from his sight. They probably came here to see if one of the dragons was the same one that demanded Will. Unfortunately, we happen to be here at the same time."

"Chilton probably wants revenge against both us and Apsylem," said Jimmy.

"Very likely and we're the first in line," said Beverly. "In the meantime, let's try to get to friendlier waters. We'll have to hunt the dragon another time."

Beverly ordered the ship to unfurl all its sails and use evasive maneuvers to get back to the nearest village, either Wolf Trap or Bal-Ti-Mor. Even Mason would be loathe to attack a village outright. She thought of her crew. They were experienced at fighting monsters and she had no doubt of their bravery but it was another thing altogether to fight people, especially the kind of depraved souls attracted by Mason's lucre. Beverly took out her pistol and watched as Mason's ship drew ever closer.

Mason fired first, cannons spewing out grapeshot, like a gigantic shotgun. Matthew was struck by one of the metal balls and went down on the deck. Beverly ordered her men to strike back with the spears laced with fire, a few of which hit a barrel of gunpowder causing explosions which blew off chunks of Mason's deck.

It appeared that it was going to be a long and ugly battle when it appeared that something was holding Mason's ship back, letting the distance between his ship and Beverly's increase.

"Look down there!" said Brian, pointing to a shadow in the water.

A black dragon rose from the water in front of Mason's ship to everybody's surprise. He spat a powerful jet of water that caused many of his pirates to fall into the water.

"Captain, should we shoot at the dragon?" said a sailor.

"No, that dragon may be the one thing that will get us home," said Beverly. "Do not attack the dragon! Under no circumstances are you to fire on it unless I tell you to." She noted that the dragon's head shape and scale patterns were different from the previous one even if the color was the same. His behavior astonished her but she was not above taking advantage of the situation.

The dragon's tail broke the rudder while he tore Mason's sails into a shower of strips with his claws. Mason yelled for his men to fire their weapons on the beast. Their guns and cannons seemed ineffectual, only irritating the beast instead of injuring him. The beast turned and bit

Mason in half, tearing his legs off. Mason screamed and screamed before finally succumbing to shock and loss of blood.

Chilton tried to go below deck to flee but was quickly batted high into the air by his tail and fell into the dragon's mouth where he was quickly turned into a gory snack.

Instead of finishing off the rest of the crew, the dragon seemed satisfied with the amount of damage he had caused and began sliding back into the water. Through her binoculars, Beverly watched as the pirates concentrated on repairing their ship instead of going after them and felt satisfied her ship would be able to get back to Bal-Ti-Mor safely.

“How is Matthew?” she said to Brian.

“He’ll live but he’s going to be out of commission for a few months. The others just need some stitches and rum for the pain.”

“He’s lucky the ball didn’t go through his head,” said Beverly. She hoped getting injured would finally stop him from calling for more fighting and violence though she doubted it would.

“Captain,” said Brian. “Why didn‘t the dragon attack us as well?”

Beverly was not a woman given to wild flights of fancy, however . . . “I have an idea . . .” said Beverly. “But I can’t prove it. I‘ll tell you when we get back to shore.”

***

One week prior

Other than to eat and defecate, Hannibal had not been away from the basket. The only time he stopped singing for more than a few minutes was when he was forced to sleep and even then he slept next to the basket and dreamed of singing his wish into reality.

He had started to worry that something had gone wrong, that there would be nothing in the basket but spoiled blood for all his efforts. However, he was reassured by the changing smell emanating from the basket that spoke of great changes and the recent sound of a heart beating.

He began speaking about how almost nothing could hurt him now, about the beauty that was underneath the surface of the ocean, about the treasures that could be found far to the west and far to the east. He talked about the sheer pleasure of being able to go to the deepest ocean, being able to hear the song of the whales through the water, how it felt to be feared and respected the world over. He talked about the ecstasy of mating, coiling around each other’s bodies and hours spent thrashing and turning the water to foam in the process.

He finally lifted the lid and saw Will in a fetal position at the bottom of the basket now full of clear liquid. He reached in and pulled Will out and held him to his chest. “Will . . .”

Will opened his eyes and put his hand on Hannibal's cheek.

Chapter End Notes

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crow's_nest shows what a crow's nest is on a ship.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grapeshot is a good definition of grapeshot

Margot Verger is not part of his crew but is a prisoner at home.

If you're trying to puzzle out what era technology this AU has, think Horatio Hornblower or Master & Commander is what I'm thinking about. Not 20th century but definitely past the Middle Ages. I am really and truly sad they never made a sequel to the Master & Commander movie but it is VERY expensive to shoot on water for real.

Beverly and her crew are specialists in that they focus primarily on fighting monsters and not foreign forces or pirates. Also I hadn't anticipated focusing on the ship's crew as much as I did but I enjoyed seeing more people try to save Will.

End Notes

Will has a secret formula for a version of Greek fire. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_fire
If the beast was closer, Will would've broken out some hoses.

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